



May 12, 2003

National Women's Check-Up Day

## More Information About *Obesity*

A growing number of women are overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, breathing problems, arthritis, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea (breathing problems while sleeping), osteoarthritis and some cancers. However, by losing weight an individual can reduce or overcome many of the health problems caused by obesity.

- ❖ Nearly one-third of all American adults are obese. Of these, about 33 percent of adult women are obese. This rate is particularly high among African American (50 percent) and Mexican American women (40 percent). ([www.hhs.gov/news/press/2002pres/20021008b.html](http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2002pres/20021008b.html))

### *Overweight or Obese?*

Overweight and obesity levels are measured with a Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI shows the relationship of weight to height. Adults wanting to calculate their BMI can use a BMI table available at [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/calc-bmi.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/calc-bmi.htm).

- ❖ Women with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 are considered overweight, while women with a BMI of 30 or more are considered obese.
- ❖ All adults (aged 18 years or older) who have a BMI of 25 or more are considered at risk for premature death and disability from being overweight or obese.
- ❖ Overweight and obesity result from an imbalance involving excessive calorie consumption and/or inadequate physical activity. For each individual, body weight is the result of a combination of genetic, metabolic, behavioral, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic influences.

### *How to Control Your Weight*

The Surgeon General suggests the following steps that can be taken by an obese individual to reduce her body weight and improve her overall health:

- ❖ Aim for healthy weight. If a person is obese, losing 10 percent of body weight can improve health.
- ❖ Work with your health care provider to create a program to help you lose weight successfully and safely.
- ❖ Be active. Physical activity for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week is very important for weight control and overall health improvement. However, you should check with your health care provider before starting any physical activity program.
- ❖ Eat a balanced diet. Eat smaller portions and foods that are lower in fat and calories, and follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines call for eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Try to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day, and choose foods that are low in saturated fats, and not high in sugar or salt.